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## CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 13 June 2023

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

### Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows R Smith J Aitman	J Robertshaw S Simpson T Ashby
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie  Claire Green  Sharon Groth	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities Town Clerk
Others:	2 members of the public.	

### P303 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Collins & D Temple.

### P304 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

### P305 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The Committee heard from two representatives of an organisation looking to run Forest School training sessions to be discussed at part of Agenda Item 15. This was followed by questions from Members.

At the discretion of the Chair, the Forest School item was moved up the agenda and discussed to allow the members of the public to hear the discussion.

*The Committee reconvened.*

### P306 FOREST SCHOOL

Members received the report from the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer along with information provided verbally via Public Participation.

Members asked questions of the members of the public in order to fully understand the proposal and what it would offer to Witney residents, where sessions would be held and the benefits it would offer to attendees.

Members asked if these sessions could be advertised/offered to organisations such as Homestart in order to support those most in need.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, agreement in principle to 6 sessions to be run at a cost to the council of £2,400 with detail to be agreed at the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting and,
3. That, the wellbeing benefits as outlined in the report are noted.

*18:27 pm - The members of the public left along with Councillor Aitman.*

P307 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 28 March, 18 April, 2 May, and 23 May were received.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 28 March, 18 April, 2 May and 23 May be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

*18:29 pm - Councillor Aitman returned.*

P308 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk along with the Committee's current terms of reference.

Members asked that the terms include the importance of water and air pollution and asked that this be added to point (j).

The Chair also raised at this time his thoughts on the Committee dealing with the issue of river pollution by way of Witney Town Council facilitating a public meeting to hear the view of residents, Thames Water and other stakeholders. He would consider the option of bringing a motion to Council on the subject.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Committee terms of reference be agreed and published including an amendment to include air & water pollution.

P309 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O. concerning its objectives and work programme for the forthcoming year.

A member raised a point of clarification on the ownership of the river and the riverbank that runs through the Country Park and Snipe Meadow and therefore who was responsible for each, which was answered by the Town Clerk.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the current objectives and work programme be agreed.

*The Town Clerk left the meeting following conclusion of the above item.*

P310 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the financial report of the Responsible Financial Officer showing figures for aspects under its remit.

No questions arose from members.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted and,

P311 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

In addition, the Committee also discussed planning applications 23/01371/LBC and 23/01372/ADV for signage at the town council's town centre reception and administration office for which they provided no comment.

**Resolved:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule and for 23/01371/LBC and 23/01372/ADV, be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P312 **APPLICATION FOR PAVEMENT LICENCE - SMARTS FISH & CHIP SHOP, HIGH STREET, WITNEY**

At the express permission of the Chair the Committee discussed an application for a new pavement licence from Smarts Fish & Chip Shop, 50 Market Square, for a renewal of a pavement licence under the Business and Planning Act 2020 due to the short timescale of the consultation.

Members had no concerns.

**Resolved:**

That, that a no objection comment is forwarded to the licencing team at WODC.

P313 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning decisions received from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).

**Resolved:**

That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted.

P314 **NOTICE OF PLANNING APPEAL DECISION - QUEEN EMMA'S DYKE, WITNEY**

The Committee received notice of planning appeal APP/D3125/W/22/3293742 141 Queen Emmas Dyke, Witney, OX28 4DT

**Resolved:**

That, the planning appeal decision be noted.

P315 **NOTICE OF PLANNING APPEAL DECISION - LAND SOUTH WEST OF DOWNS ROAD, CURBRIDGE BUSINESS PARK**

The Committee received notice of planning appeal APP/D3125/W/22/3307358 Land at Colwell Green, Witney.

**Resolved:**

That, the planning appeal decision be noted.

P316 **APPLICATION FOR MINOR VARIATION OF PREMISES LICENCE - SHELL WAITROSE DUCKLINGTON**

The Committee received the application from Shell (Waitrose Ducklington), Ducklington Lane, Witney, OX28 4TT for a minor variation of a premises licence under the Licencing Act 2003.

**Resolved:**

That, the Council makes no objection to this application.

P317 **APPROVAL OF STREET NAME - NORREYS AVENUE**

The Committee received correspondence from West Oxfordshire District Council's address management team confirming the approval of "Norreys Avenue" as a new street name.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

**P318 WITNEY LAKE FISHING SEASON**

The Committee received the report of the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer following a request from Witney Angling Society to extend the fishing season at Witney Lake.

The Deputy Town Clerk corrected the report as to the level of the current fishing rights charge, which was £917 including VAT and not the £1,500 quoted.

Members discussed the proposal and were pleased the extension would be carefully monitored by both the Angling Society and the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer. They agreed that a pro-rata increase in the rent would be appropriate therefore the new rent would be £1,120 inclusive of VAT.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the extension to the fishing season at Witney Lake be granted and,
3. That, the annual fishing rights charge be raised to £1,120 including inflation.

**P319 WATER VOLE RECOVERY PLAN**

The Committee received the report of the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer regarding joining the Berks, Bucks & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust's (BBOWT's) Water Vole Recovery Project.

Members were already aware of the problematic impact of invasive American Mink on wildlife populations and therefore all supported the recommendations to control their population around the Witney Lake.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Town Council supports the Water Vole Recovery Project to control the American Mink population.

**P320 WEED CONTROL & USE OF PESTICIDES**

The Committee received the report of the Operation Manager regarding the potential reintroduction of the use of pesticides.

Members understood the significant labour impact the decision to cease the use of pesticides had caused on the council and asked that the policy be drafted by officers. Weeds and overgrown vegetation had been reported widely following the good early summer weather and a solution needed to be sought.

Members understood that changes to tree management, including impeding grass growth around their trunks were necessary to protect the tree stock and limit any further damage.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, officers draft a Pesticides Policy on town council owned land for agreement at a future meeting and,

3. That, a growth regulator be used around the base of trees.

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The meeting closed at: 7.45 pm

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Chair

## Witney Town Council

### Planning Minutes - 13th June 2023

#### Committee Members Present :-

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311- 1 WTC/088/23 Plot Ref :-23/01237/FUL Type :- FULL  
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 31/05/2023  
 Location :- 355C THORNEY LEYS Date Returned :- 14/06/2023  
 THORNEY LEYS

Proposal : Installation of security roller shutters to front elevation.

Observations : While Witney Town Council do not object to this application, Members are disappointed at the loss of an accessible toilet at the premises. There are no objections to the security roller shutter.

311- 2 WTC/089/23 Plot Ref :-23/01156/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE  
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 31/05/2023  
 Location :- 8 HOLFORD ROAD Date Returned :- 14/06/2023  
 HOLFORD ROAD

Proposal : Proposed single storey rear wrap around extension.

Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

311- 3 WTC/090/23 Plot Ref :-23/01203/RES Type :- RESERVED  
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 31/05/2023  
 Location :- LAND EAST OF Date Returned :- 14/06/2023  
 ISABELLE SPENCER WAY

Proposal : Reserved matters approval for local centre and associated infrastructure pursuant to outline permission 12/0084/P/OP.

Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this proposal, it makes the following observations:

Members have expressed safeguarding concerns for the primary school and play area, both of which will be overlooked by the flats in Block A. Opportunities for screening should be sought - physicals screens on the building, obscure glazing where appropriate, as well as potential for softer, green-scaping with additional trees around the school and play area boundaries.

The provision for cycle parking is insufficient. The proposal is for 39 flats with up to 126 residents. The developer has included provision for 78 cycle racks. The current allocation would not pass the 2022 standards, as set out in the Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport & Connectivity Plan Active Travel document. The bike racks are located further away than the car parking spaces and require pedestrians to walk through the car park and across the path of the loading bay, which will be used by HGVs, additionally pedestrians will be required to walk via the bin store areas that will be accessed by bin lorries.

Witney Town Council are not objecting to this application, but it does ask that the applicant works closely with the Active Travel team at Oxfordshire County Council to improve both the number of cycle spaces that are provided and their locations on the site, to ensure best safety and compliance with the Active Travel Strategy. The LTCP from July 2022 stipulates walkable communities and inclusive cycle networks, which give priority at junctions for cyclists.

Swift sightings are now prevalent on the site and this development should include provision for swift bricks or universal bricks to support this endangered species.

Members are aware that the original site layout included provision for a pedestrian crossing on the Western side of this development, which would have encouraged safe crossing for pedestrians on the important walking route from the Community Hub area to the school, crossing Isabelle Spencer Way. Witney Town Council would like to see a commitment for a full Zebra Crossing in this area, and not just a dropped kerb, 'indicative safe space to cross' arrangement.

Witney Town Council request that a Grampian condition be imposed which requires that both this Community Hub development, and the Sports Pavilion development (23/01202/RES) be completed ahead of the construction of 74 homes sought by planning application 23/01206/FUL.

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311- 4	WTC/091/23	Plot Ref :-23/01206/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-		Date Received :-	31/05/2023
	Location :-	LAND WEST OF WITNEY NORTH OF A40, EAST OF DOWNS RD CURBRIDGE	Date Returned :-	13/06/2023

Proposal : Erection of seventy four dwellings and associated infrastructure.

Observations : Witney Town Council would have preferred that more information be available when considering this proposal - At the time of being discussed by Members the consultee responses are not available from Thames Water or the Highways Authority.

Members request that a full Environmental Impact Assessment is sought. Whilst an EIA was prepared some years ago for this development area, Members now consider this information to be out-of-date and not representative of the much changed biodiversity at the site, including newly established habitats while the land has been unoccupied. Members raised the point that the Biodiversity Report Declaration of Adequacy has not been signed in Part B by the applicant and it has not been signed off in Part D by WODC or an appointed person on behalf of WODC.

Members discussed concerns brought to them from residents with regards to the changing ground levels at the development site. Residents of the neighbouring residential area in Mott Close report that ground levels to the rear of their properties have been increased during construction phases to a point that their privacy is compromised. Witney Town Council ask that Planning Officers ensure that natural ground levels are measured and agreed ahead of any planning permission being granted.

Another concern raised by residents is access to the existing properties in Mott Close being compromised and whether there will be adequate space for a new bin store, since residents currently use the pavement area to the West of Plot no. 74.

Witney Town Council would support the imposition of a Grampian Condition requiring that Thames Water demonstrate a sewerage capacity for this



development before any construction is started.

Further, Witney Town Council request that a Grampian condition be imposed which requires that this proposed development cannot be commenced until both the Community Hub development (23/01203/RES) and the Sports Pavilion development (23/01202/RES) are complete.

Witney Town Council ask that Section 106 funding be sought for associated infrastructure for this area, including play areas, benches, waste bins, dog bins and grit bins. And if applicable a Section 278 request from Oxfordshire County Council, or other developer contribution to enhance Active Travel, specifically for the long awaited Deer Park Road to Curbridge Bridleway improvements which runs through the estate.

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311- 5	WTC/092/23	Plot Ref :-23/01086/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	31/05/2023
	Location :- 191 FARMERS CLOSE FARMERS CLOSE		Date Returned :-	14/06/2023
	Proposal :	Erection of single storey side and rear extensions.		
	Observations :	While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.		
		Members request that the Planning Officer consider concerns raised by residents at a neighbouring property.		

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311- 6	WTC/093/23	Plot Ref :-23/01390/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	31/05/2023
	Location :- 33 BLENHEIM DRIVE BLENHEIM DRIVE		Date Returned :-	14/06/2023
	Proposal :	Erection of single storey side and rear extensions (previously approved 23/00018/HHD).		
	Observations :	While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.		

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311- 7	WTC/094/23	Plot Ref :-23/01362/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	02/06/2023
	Location :- BEEKEEPERS 18 - 22 MARKET SQUARE		Date Returned :-	14/06/2023
	Proposal :	Installation of new external TV and supporting framework to rear garden.		
	Observations :	While Witney Town Council do not object to this application, Members discussed the neighbourliness of the proposal and ask that careful consideration be given to potential harm from sound and light disturbance.		

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311- 8 WTC/095/23 Plot Ref :-23/00997/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 02/06/2023  
Location :- 43 WOODPECKER WAY Date Returned :- 14/06/2023  
WOODPECKER WAY  
Proposal : Erection of an orangery to rear of dwelling and construction of a summer house  
added to detached garage.  
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

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311- 9 WTC/096/23 Plot Ref :-23/01202/RES Type :- RESERVED  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 02/06/2023  
Location :- LAND WEST OF WITNEY Date Returned :- 14/06/2023  
NORTH OF A40  
EAST OF DOWNS ROAD  
Proposal : Reserved matters application for a sports pavilion and associated infrastructure.  
Observations : Witney Town Council support this application for a sports pavilion. Members  
make the following observations:  
  
Witney Town Council request that a Grampian condition be imposed which  
requires that both this Sports Pavilion development, and the Local Centre  
development (23/01203/RES) be completed ahead of the construction of 74  
homes sought by planning application 23/01206/FUL.  
  
The cycle parking provision for the pavilion is inadequate for the facility,  
opportunities should be taken to encourage active travel and Members  
recommend that secure cycle parking should be available for at least 30 cycles.  
  
Members ask that the pavilion be named 'Windrush Place Pavilion' to avoid any  
confusion with existing facilities in Witney, especially for visiting teams.

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The Meeting closed at : 7:45pm

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council